

# Top of Mind Summit: Digital Health

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Top of Mind Summit: Digital Health brought together more than 70 leaders and innovators from health systems, technology companies, and other health organizations in April 2024 for a mix of structured panel discussions and small-group roundtable sessions where participants discussed cutting-edge topics with relevant peers. The roundtables created space for open dialogue, proactive deliberation, and meaningful engagement.



## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

# The Telemedicine Mirage

“The Telemedicine Mirage” roundtable examined how health systems are navigating the shifting landscape of virtual care adoption and utilization following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants sought to digest the use cases that are driving greatest value for consumers and providers and that also optimize access for hybrid care.

### Key Takeaways

- Implementing hybrid care models and engaging patients through digital tools can help sustain telemedicine adoption, improve patient satisfaction and quality of care, and provide convenient and cost-effective alternative options to in-clinic or hospital encounters.
- Simplifying telemedicine platforms and aligning care delivery with patient preferences can reduce administrative burdens, increase efficiency, and enhance the effectiveness of virtual care options.
- Utilizing remote monitoring, eConsults, and real-time automation tools can improve access to care, reduce appointment lead times, and ensure more optimal long-term coordination of care, particularly for patients with chronic illnesses or in subspecialties experiencing acute shortages of providers.

### Discussion Highlights

The roundtable began by discussing consumer preferences for telemedicine and its impacts on utilization. While telemedicine usage spiked during the pandemic, many institutions have since stabilized their virtual care delivery at consistent yet more moderate levels. Patient convenience, cost savings, and positive patient feedback drive the continued use of telemedicine, yet many patients still report a preference for in-person care. An estimated 60% of telemedicine appointments are going unused. But implementing hybrid care models and engaging patients through digital navigators and virtual rooming were highlighted as potential strategies for increasing engagement and reducing no-show rates. These rates remain considerably high across the board and contribute to the often-lengthy periods patients must wait for appointments.



Provider preferences and challenges were also discussed, with an emphasis on administrative burdens and the need for a culture shift toward digital health. There was a consensus on the need for simplified, self-service platforms to streamline telemedicine processes. Participants noted the importance of aligning care delivery with patient preferences and the role of technology in enhancing access and efficiency. Remote monitoring and eConsults were identified as effective tools for improving access and reducing appointment lead times.

# Top of Mind Summit: Digital Health

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS The Telemedicine Mirage

Technology and modalities in telemedicine were explored, with the panel focusing on the integration of digital tools to support various care pathways. Participants discussed the effectiveness of eConsults in reducing unnecessary visits and improving care coordination. The need for real-time automation and infrastructure improvements to support digital health metrics was emphasized. There was also discussion on the financial implications of telemedicine and the need for incentives to promote its use among providers at even greater levels.

### Facilitators



**Heather Meyers, MBA**  
Director of Virtual Care,  
Boston Children's Hospital



**Tracey Ryan**  
Vice President, Patient Access  
Service Line, UPMC

### Participants

**Saima Aftab**

Chief Strategy Officer,  
Nicklaus Children's Health System

**Sachin Agrawal**

CEO, eVisit

**Jennifer Berliner**

Director, Clinician Well-Being, UPMC

**Gaye Bok**

Partner, Mass General Brigham  
Innovation

**Aaron Carpenter**

Chief Nursing and Patient Operations  
Officer, Nemours Children's Health

**Todd Craig**

Chief Medical Information Officer,  
Mercy

**Jim Creason**

CEO, ThriveAP

**Jason Holcomb**

Vice President, ThriveAP

**Will Kaigler**

CEO, sovaSage

**Kathy Kaluhiokalani**

CEO, Pip Care

**Steve Low**

President, KLAS Research

**Teagan Maguire**

Doctoral Student, Health Services  
Research, University of Maryland

**Reed McManigle**

Mentor in Residence,  
Carnegie Mellon University

**Andrew Watson**

Physician, UPMC



## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

# Driving Positive Behavioral Change

The Driving Positive Behavioral Change roundtable tackled the issues of how digital tools and personalized care can improve outcomes for people with chronic conditions and the behavior change mechanisms that have been shown to work.

### Key Takeaways

- Digital tools tailored to individual needs can significantly enhance patient engagement and improve outcomes.
- Building trust, convenience, and continual reinforcement are essential for successful patient engagement.
- Effective use of data to adapt interventions over time to a patient's changing health care needs is needed to maintain engagement.

### Discussion Highlights

The Driving Positive Behavioral Change roundtable discussion offered summit attendees an insightful exploration into the challenges and opportunities for enhancing patient engagement in their health care



journey through personalized and dynamic communications and interventions. Panelists from various health care sectors discussed the integration of digital tools, the challenges of patient engagement, and the effectiveness of incentive programs, all aimed at fostering sustainable behavioral changes to achieve desired or optimal goals and outcomes related to an individual's health.

The roundtable highlighted personalization's important role in health care interactions and interventions. The group discussed how digital tools can facilitate the tailoring of health care strategies to individual needs, making interventions more relevant and meaningful. This approach not only enhances patient engagement but also improves the efficacy of health care outcomes.

A significant challenge discussed was the engagement of patients in their health care journeys. Trust, convenience, and continual reinforcement emerged as essential elements for successful patient engagement. The discussion group shared their experiences and strategies for overcoming these challenges, emphasizing the need for health care systems to support patients in making informed choices and building confidence in their ability to change behaviors.

# Top of Mind Summit: Digital Health

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS Driving Positive Behavioral Change

The discussion also covered the importance of dynamic interventions adapting to a patient's changing health care needs over time. Effectively utilizing data to assess and modify interventions according to individual progress is crucial for maintaining engagement and ensuring the interventions remain relevant.

Panelists further discussed the role of incentive programs in enhancing patient engagement. The effectiveness of simple and understandable incentive strategies was noted, with examples of successful programs that motivate patients to engage in healthier behaviors and adhere to treatment protocols.

### Facilitators



**Ellen Beckjord, PhD**

Vice President, Population Health and Clinical Optimization, UPMC Health Plan



**Erich Huang, MD, PhD**

Head of Clinical Informatics, Verily

### Participants

**Nicole Ansani**

Senior Vice President, New Development Initiatives, UPMC Enterprises

**John Bass**

CEO, Hashed Health

**Todd Craig**

Chief Medical Information Officer, Mercy

**Jatin Dave**

Chief Medical Officer, Commonwealth Medicine

**Allison Hydzik**

Senior Director, Media Relations, UPMC

**Kathy Kaluhiokalani**

CEO, Pip Care

**Kyle Kiser**

CEO, Arrive Health

**Teagan Maguire**

Doctoral Student, Health Services Research, University of Maryland

**Tracey Ryan**

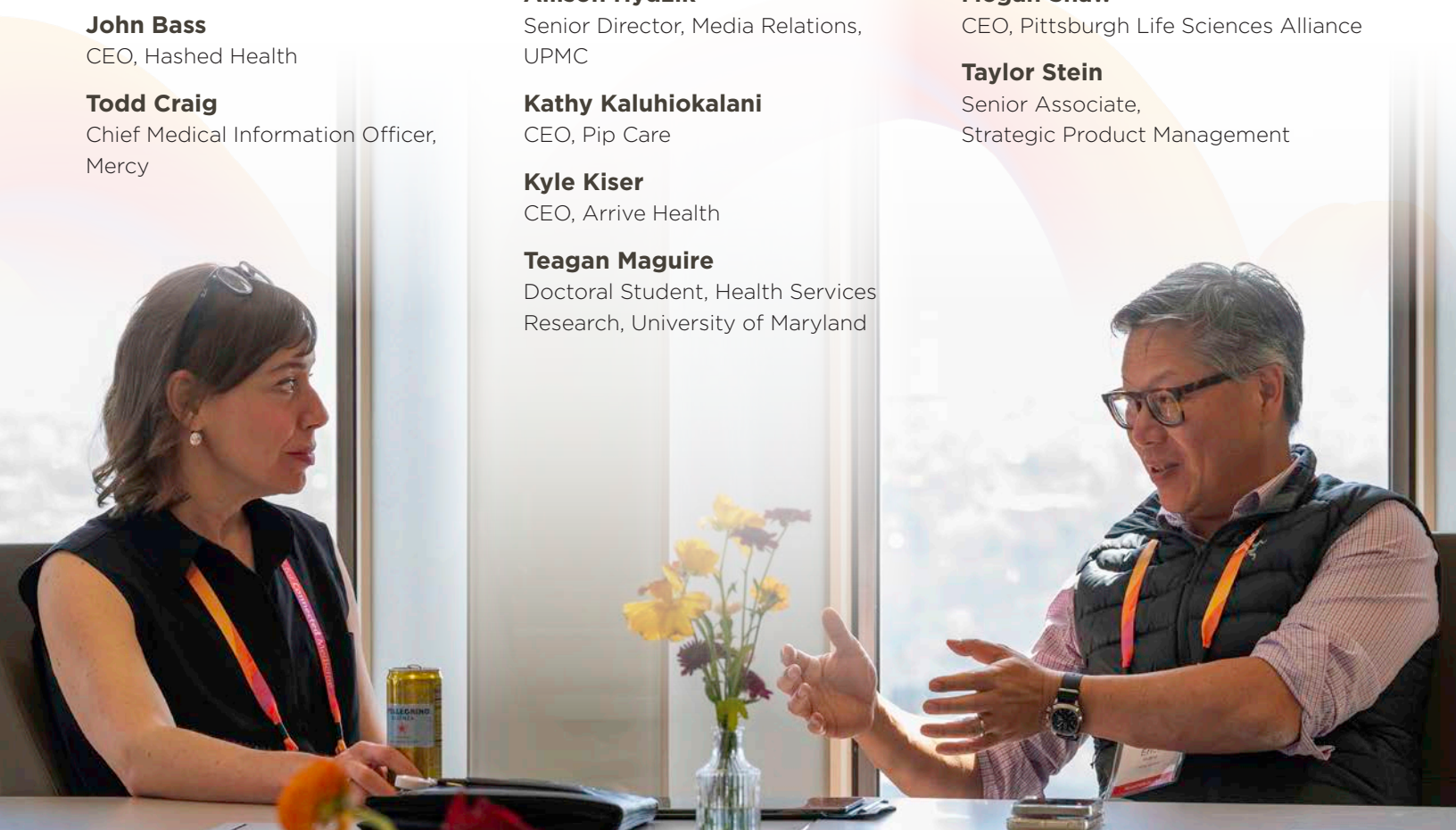
Vice President, Patient Access Service Line, UPMC

**Megan Shaw**

CEO, Pittsburgh Life Sciences Alliance

**Taylor Stein**

Senior Associate, Strategic Product Management



## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

# Pharmacy Innovation

The Pharmacy Innovation roundtable explored innovative strategies to tackle rising prescription drug costs, promote patient engagement, and enhance affordability for patients and members. This white paper shares a summary of the discussion.

### Key Takeaways

- Digital tools have the potential to significantly enhance data sharing and medication management, and could lead to more personalized and timely patient care.
- The role of pharmacists must evolve to become more central figures in a patient's care, in a primary care setting to enhance coordination and management.
- The high cost of therapeutics and the need for a consistent reimbursement framework pose significant challenges, increasingly driving consensus on the need for reforms.

### Discussion Highlights

The Pharmacy Innovation roundtable brought together pharmacy leaders from UPMC and UPMC Health Plan to explore current challenges facing the pharmacy industry and emerging or needed innovations in the sector to achieve long-term financial stability, access to affordable therapeutics, and durable patient outcomes. The discussion revolved around improving access, affordability, and patient care in the context of high drug prices, regulatory impacts, and the increasing integration of digital health solutions, and how pharmacists can play more direct and central roles in helping manage patient health needs beyond the dispensing of drugs.

Participants in the Pharmacy Innovation roundtable discussed significant access issues, especially in rural areas, emphasizing the need for innovative solutions to ensure pharmacy services are available when and where needed. The accelerating closure of pharmacies in these areas poses a considerable barrier to medication access, necessitating new measures and solutions.

The need for innovation in pharmacy practice was a central discussion point, focusing on enhancing patient care and affordability through technology. Innovations like online provider transparency tools and real-time decision support systems were highlighted as potential game-changers in improving prescribing decisions and patient care.

The discussion also emphasized pharmacists' evolving role, from medication dispensers to central figures in patient care. It suggested that pharmacists should be better integrated into primary care settings. There was a strong call for pharmacists to take a more active role in patient education and chronic disease management.



# Top of Mind Summit: Digital Health

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS Pharmacy Innovation

The conversation acknowledged the challenges posed by high-cost therapeutics and the lack of a consistent reimbursement framework. There was a consensus on the need for reform in reimbursement models to support value-based care, which would incentivize improved patient outcomes and more rational drug pricing.

Technology's role in transforming pharmacy services was discussed extensively. Panelists talked about leveraging digital tools to enhance data sharing and improve medication management, which could lead to more personalized and timely patient care.

The roundtable concluded with a strong message about the necessity of embracing technological advancements and rethinking traditional roles and models in pharmacy to better meet the needs of today's patients and health care systems.

### Facilitators



**Becky Taylor, PharmD**  
Vice President, Pharmacy  
Service Line, UPMC



**Chronis Manolis**  
Chief Pharmacy Officer,  
UPMC Health Plan

### Participants

**Rima Abdel Massih**  
CEO, Infectious Disease Connect

**Rosheema Bala**  
Senior Analyst, UPMC Enterprises

**Aaron Brauser**  
CEO, Realyze Intelligence

**Cindy Chepanoske**  
Director, Technology Licensing,  
Carnegie Mellon University

**Ken Cohen**  
Executive Director of Translational  
Research, Optum Health

**Matthew Cook**  
CEO, Children's Hospital Association

**Jatin Dave**  
Chief Medical Officer,  
Commonwealth Medicine

**Kathryn Heffernan**  
Senior Director, Strategic Product  
Management, UPMC Enterprises

**Veronica Hill**  
Vice President, Clinical Operations,  
ThriveAP

**Erich Huang**  
Head of Clinical Informatics, Verily

**Kyle Kiser**  
CEO, Arrive Health

**Michael Potts**  
Executive Director, Clinical Informatics,  
Mercy

**Mayank Taneja**  
Vice President, Ventures,  
OSF Healthcare



## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

# Workforce Retention and Growth

The Workforce Retention and Growth roundtable addressed workforce shortages that still pose a significant risk to providers and health systems despite experiencing some stabilization in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion sought to identify innovative approaches that are helping to improve retention and attract new talent to health care.

### Key Takeaways

- New pipeline and transition programs focusing on quality and safety, paired with strong mentorship and support systems, can work to improve retention rates among new and early-stage career health care providers of all disciplines.
- Innovating beyond current electronic health record (EHR) systems and pushing for regulatory changes are necessary for reducing administrative burdens on health care workers that ultimately can enhance job satisfaction and retention.
- Technologies that save time and reduce cognitive loads, such as ambient AI and automated systems, should be used to improve the work-life balance of health care professionals.

### Discussion Highlights

The Workforce Retention and Growth roundtable examined the current challenges and possible strategies to address workforce shortages in the health care sector. Physician turnover has extremely high financial effects on health care systems, with an estimate ranging from \$500,000 to \$1 million per physician in one of the participants' organizations. Substantial rates of turnover and retention issues among nurses are also worrisome and are more acute in certain geographic areas of the U.S.

Administrative burdens, especially ones linked to managing EHRs and other systems, were identified as major contributors to workforce dissatisfaction. The consensus was that while these solutions are valuable tools, health care systems need to innovate further while pushing for regulatory changes to ease or adapt requirements around documentation. The need for cohesion among health care systems to accelerate these changes through a unified front or voice was seen as an important means to faster adoption of change.

Provider and clinician burnout was a central theme of the discussion, with participants discussing historical comparisons showing a dramatic decrease in the pool of qualified candidates for nursing positions. Successful programs that have improved retention include





# Top of Mind Summit: Digital Health

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS Workforce Retention and Growth

new pipeline and transition programs focused on quality and safety, achieving a 97% retention rate for new nurses at one system when mentorship and support structures are in place.

The roundtable discussion also explored the ever important and increasing role of technology in alleviating cognitive burdens and saving time for clinicians. Ambient AI and other digital tools were highlighted for their potential to optimize workflows and reduce clinician burnout. However, there was a call for a shift in mindset regarding the use of these technologies — rather than using saved time to increase workloads, it should be used to improve the quality of life for health care professionals.

### Facilitators



**Jennifer Berliner, MD**  
Director of Clinician Well-Being,  
UPMC



**Matthew Cook, MBA**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Children's Hospital Association

### Participants

**Krishna Bhagayath**  
Medical Director, Evolent Health

**Aaron Brauser**  
CEO, Realyze Intelligence

**Aaron Carpenter**  
Chief Nursing and Patient Operations  
Officer, Nemours Children's Health

**Jim Creason**  
CEO, ThriveAP

**Veronica Hill**  
Vice President, Clinical Operations,  
ThriveAP

**Jason Holcomb**  
Vice President, ThriveAP

**Heather Meyers**  
Director of Virtual Care,  
Boston Children's Hospital

**Mary Beth Navarra-Sirio**  
Vice President, UPMC Enterprises

**Michael Potts**  
Executive Director,  
Clinical Informatics, Mercy

**Mayank Taneja**  
Vice President, Ventures,  
OSF Healthcare

**Les Wilkinson**  
Chief Operating Officer, Hashed Health

**Andrew Yohe**  
Chief Operating Officer,  
UPMC Work Partners

**Srinivasan Suresh**  
Chief Medical Information Officer,  
UPMC Children's Hospital of  
Pittsburgh



## About the Center for Connected Medicine

The Center for Connected Medicine (CCM) at UPMC is defining the future of the modern health system through programming that informs, connects, and inspires leaders and innovators in health care. Collaborating with a network of experts across the health care ecosystem, the CCM focuses its research and events on consumer-centered solutions, digital transformation, and scientific and medical innovation. Learn more at [www.connectedmed.com](http://www.connectedmed.com).



## About UPMC Enterprises

UPMC Enterprises is the innovation, commercialization and venture capital arm of UPMC, a world-renowned, nonprofit health care provider and insurer committed to delivering exceptional people-centered care and community services. Working in close collaboration with innovators from UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, as well as others worldwide, UPMC Enterprises accelerates science from the bench to the patient's bedside. With an emphasis on translational sciences and digital solutions, UPMC Enterprises provides its diverse portfolio companies and partners with capital, connections and resources to develop solutions to health care's most complex problems.

# UPMC Enterprises